



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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July 20, 2004

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – HERITAGE
GROUP HOME, WEST COVINA SITE**

We have completed a review of Heritage-West Covina Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by Heritage, Inc. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Heritage-West Covina Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Heritage-West Covina Group Home was providing services for six Los Angeles County DCFS children. Heritage-West Covina Group Home is located in the Fifth District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review was to determine whether the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covered basic child safety and licensing issues, and included an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, facility inspections, and interviews with two children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to make repairs in the kitchen and one of the resident bedrooms; provide documentation to show that the residents receive weekly individual and/or group therapy; properly maintain medication distribution logs; train staff regarding appropriate interaction with residents; and provide each resident with a photo album/life book.

Attached is a detailed report of the review findings.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management is required to provide a corrective action plan to the Children's Group Home Ombudsman within 15 business days from the receipt of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact DeWitt Roberts at (626) 293-1101.

JTM:DR:CC:bg

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer
Narinder Heer, Executive Director, Heritage-West Covina Group Home
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
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**Heritage Group Home
West Covina Site
1923 East Eckerman Ave
West Covina, CA 91791
Phone: (626) 332-4600
License No.: 197801967
Rate Classification Level: 11**

I. Facility and Environment

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The West Covina Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is a large facility located in a residential community. The Group Home is clean, spacious, and comfortable. The Group Home is well maintained, nicely landscaped, and blends well with the other homes on the block. There were no observable safety hazards.

The interior of the Group Home is generally neat and clean. The décor provides a home-like atmosphere. The common rooms are nicely decorated and well maintained. The resident bedrooms are spacious, comfortable, and personalized to each child's desire with posters, pictures, and knick-knacks. However, there are some areas that need improvement.

In the kitchen, the walls and cabinets have chipped paint and several patched areas that need painting.

In bedroom number one, there is a broken dresser drawer. Inside the closet, there is a large patch spot that needs painting.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a VCR. There are books and resource materials. However, the computer is non-functional and inaccessible to the residents.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated, and properly stored.

Recommendations

- 1. Heritage Group Home management:**
 - a. Paint the walls and cabinets in the kitchen.**

- b. Repair or replace the dresser drawer in bedroom number one.**
- c. Paint the inside closet wall in bedroom number one.**
- d. Provide a working computer for the residents use.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Residents received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the Agency's program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, realistic, measurable, and time specific. There is documentation to support the residents' and placement workers' participation in the development or update of the NSPs.

The quarterly report for one resident is current, comprehensive, and appropriately focused on the goals of the NSP. The other resident has not been in the Group Home long enough to require a quarterly report.

The residents are provided with psychological testing, and emotional and developmental counseling as required by the Program Statement. However, case files do not reflect adequate documentation to show evidence of residents receiving regular weekly individual and/or group therapy.

Recommendation

- 2. Heritage Group Home management provide documentation to show that the residents receive weekly individual and/or group therapy as required by the Program Statement.**

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Residents attend regular classes at a local school. Both records contain current semester report cards and/or progress reports for the residents. Residents reported that they are provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school and feel that the Group Home is supportive of their academic progress.

The Agency's program includes the development of residents' daily living skills. The residents are involved in the planning and preparation phase of meals. Hygiene care is discussed as needed and employment preparation encouraged.

Residents are offered the opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Residents have the opportunity to work and manage their own money.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Agency provides its residents opportunities to participate in recreational activities. The residents expressed satisfaction with the recreational activities and stated that the recreation schedules are followed.

The Group Home utilizes local community organizations for recreational and program resources. The residents reported that they participate in planning some of the activities. The residents have free time and are able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation is provided to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents for two case files

Comments:

The residents have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that the children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist. However, the medication distribution logs are not properly maintained.

Recommendation

- 3. Heritage Group Home management properly maintain medication distribution logs.**

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents expressed satisfaction with the Agency and its staff stating that the atmosphere was generally respectful. Residents participate in an initial orientation and the Group Home's policies and procedures are posted. Residents reported that they feel safe in the Group Home and that there is no interference with their daily living functions.

Residents reported satisfaction with the taste of the food and with their ability to participate in menu development. They reported that there is sufficient staff supervision and expressed satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with most staff. However, one resident stated that there is a staff person who does not treat him with respect and dignity. According to the Agency's Director, she was not aware that the resident was mistreated and would address the matter with staff. Residents feel there is at least one staff member they can easily talk to and trust.

Residents reported that they are assigned chores to complete on a daily basis that are reasonable and not too demanding. Residents are able to have visitors and make and receive personal telephone calls. They are permitted to contact their probation officers, attorneys, and family members as needed. Residents are able to attend weekly religious services of their choice and feel that the Agency is respectful of their cultural lifestyles. The Agency allows the residents to celebrate holidays.

Residents reported that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Residents are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendation

- 4. Heritage Group Home management ensure that staff treat residents with respect and dignity and monitor their interactions.**

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Agency provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The Group Home supplies its residents with the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Agency provides residents with the required minimum base allowance, which they are able to increase according to the Agency's behavioral system. Residents are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and adequate storage.

Only one resident had a photo album/life book.

Recommendation

- 5. Heritage Group Home management provide each resident with a photo album/life book.**